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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 002507

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: ORAL MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY REGARDING  
4/18 RIYADH MEETING ON IRAQ

REF: SECSTATE 97844

(U) Classified by Ambassador W. R. Pearson. Reason:1.5(b)(d).

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Summary  
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1. (C) Ambassador called on MFA Undersecretaries Baki Ilkin and Ali Tuygan April 17 to deliver reftel message to the GOT regarding the April 18 meeting on Iraq in Riyadh, noting our concern that Syria may try to hijack the proceedings. Tuygan said Turkey would work for moderation. They also discussed Turkey's interest in helping with humanitarian assistance, in reconstruction and the possibility it would want to contribute to a stabilization force. End summary.

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Riyadh Meeting  
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2. (C) Tuygan noted he will go to Riyadh with F.M. Gul, who was invited by the Saudis; the Saudis explained that the meeting would "take stock of events in Iraq and try to find common ground" for the next stage in developments there. He offered that most of the participants, including Syria and Iran, will try using the meeting to send a strong message to the U.S. Other attendees will push for cooperation with the USG while highlighting "local sensitivities, which are exacting a high price," Tuygan said. "We need to say something to our publics," he added. Both Tuygan and Ilkin stated that Turkey will do what it can to promote moderation at the meeting, noting that "this is not the time not to cooperate" with the USG.

3. (C) Tuygan raised two points which, he said, are likely to be on the agenda in Riyadh: (1) the Middle East peace process, in which Turkey wants to play a constructive role; and (2) Syria's draft UNSC resolution regarding a WMD-free zone -- an idea Damascus pushed at the early March meeting of regional FoMins in Istanbul. On both these fronts, the Saudis will be key to setting a moderate tone; "we've seen too many (regional) meetings," Tuygan said, "dominated by the radicals." He and Ilkin doubted whether a positive post-meeting statement would be possible.

4. (C) Ambassador reiterated that the USG is aware of the possible Syrian approach in Riyadh, noting that, given Syria's own WMD programs and refusal to sign various WMD treaties, Damascus is not in a strong position to push its draft resolution. He also acknowledged that the Saudi role at the meeting is key -- and that the USG is not asking Turkey to "shoulder any special burdens."

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Other Issues  
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5. (C) Ambassador noted that the Turkish Red Crescent (Kizilay) has publicly criticized the U.S. for a perceived failure to facilitate its humanitarian mission in Iraq. Ambassador noted that Kizilay's objectives in Iraq are commendable, but its anxiety is misplaced. Kizilay needs to above all to coordinate its activities with the ICRC. Moreover, the U.S. simply does not have the manpower to supply security to Kizilay convoys. Ambassador urged MFA to encourage Kizilay to actively seek out ways to participate in the ICRC framework. Tuygan then noted Turkey's interest in bringing injured civilians to Turkey for treatment in Turkish hospitals, and asked whether it was possible for Turkey to obtain permission from Kuwait for access to Kuwaiti airspace and airports. Ambassador commended the GOT for its interest, noting the crush of identical requests from other countries.

16. (C) Ambassador noted we had been told that Turkey was preparing to offer resources for stabilization of Iraq. Tuygan said that the GOT has reacted favorably to the idea, though it has not discussed the issue in detail and the modalities and other arrangements would need to be clarified first. Tuygan expressed concern lest any such force apportion different segments of Iraq to different ethnic groups, noting GOT is particularly disappointed at statements by Barzani and Talabani, which imply to the Turks that the Kurds are interested in asserting independent control over the north. He claimed that: (1) some 3,000 Kurdish families have recently moved into Kirkuk; and (2) that the Peshmergas are taking control of abandoned weapons, including tanks, and have not in fact left the city.

17. (7) Ambassador noted these concerns. He also stated that information coming to the USG -- which has a wealth of resources on the ground -- paints a completely different picture of the situation: there is, in fact, no Kurdish takeover of Kirkuk; the Kirkuk-Yumurtalik oil pipeline will soon open under U.S. control. The Ambassador emphasized that the USG is operating in complete good faith in Iraq; that we have read the riot act to Barzani and Talabani regarding the need for them to do the same; and that something must be done to bridge the knowledge gap between rumor in Turkey and what we know as the actual state of things in the region. Tuygan took the point, expressing interest in greater U.S.-Turkey intelligence coordination. He noted that the GOT fully accepts that the USG is showing good faith, but noted that "there always will be an element of suspicion" regarding the activities of the Iraqi Kurds; Tuygan said that the GOT was pleased with the outcome of the recent meeting between Iraqi Turkoman representatives and General Osman.

18. (C) Tuygan and Ilkin expressed interest in participating in reconstruction efforts, and to be kept informed as to developments along these lines. Ambassador replied that we will encourage Gen. Garner to meet with the Turkish Ambassador in Kuwait. He noted that the Embassy in Ankara routinely supplies information about opportunities there to Turkish companies, who are free to place bids with prime contractors.

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